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WASHINGTON, D.C.

August 18, 2000

**Via Facsimile & U.S. Mail**

Thomas Krueger, Esq.  
Mail Code C-14J  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
77 West Jackson Blvd.  
Chicago, Illinois 60604

**Re: Nicor Gas/Mercury Sites**

Dear Mr. Krueger:

We are in receipt of Brad Stimple's letter dated August 10, 2000, regarding additional screening of homes associated with the mercury regulator removals conducted by our contractors.

As you know, this issue first arose when an individual employee at one of our contractors, Henkels & McCoy ("H&M"), was identified as potentially mishandling mercury in the process of removing regulators. Since becoming aware of this circumstance, Nicor immediately undertook necessary and appropriate actions to ensure the protection of public health and the environment. These actions have included the relocation of residents and the completion of extensive cleanup work at homes where mercury has been identified. Nicor has also screened every home at which this individual employee of H&M had performed mercury regulator removal activities.

In addition to the immediate response actions, Nicor has undertaken an investigation regarding the work performed by H&M. As part of this investigation, which has been conducted in conjunction with H&M, we have carefully reviewed all H&M projects involving mercury regulators with Nicor inspectors and supervisors. H&M has likewise reviewed each of these projects with employees who may have information regarding contractor work on Nicor projects.

While the interviews with the relevant employees did not indicate any specific incidents of mercury mishandling at any additional homes, Nicor agrees with U.S. EPA that additional homes should be screened. As Dick Tappan of Nicor has verbally communicated to Brad Stimple of U.S. EPA, Nicor is already proceeding with the screening of all remaining homes at

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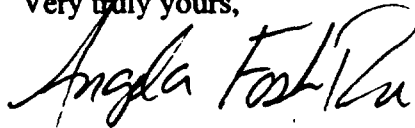
which H&M may have handled mercury associated with regulator removals conducted for Nicor. In all, there will be 75 additional homes screened, and Nicor anticipates completing this ambitious screening program by the middle of next week. However, the ability to meet this target is largely dependent upon obtaining access to all of the homes. =

As was done with the homes in Mount Prospect and Lombard, Nicor will keep Mr. Stimple informed of the results of the screening. When a house is identified as having mercury readings, Nicor will immediately pursue appropriate response actions as it has in the past, in close coordination with Mr. Stimple and representatives of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry and the Illinois Department of Public Health.

As referenced in Mr. Stimple's August 10<sup>th</sup> letter, in regard to other contractors, Nicor has contacted their other contractors and requested information from them in order to assist in identifying the work they have done that could have involved the removal of mercury regulators. Nicor is also researching their own internal records and will provide you with additional information as it becomes available.

If you or Mr. Stimple have questions or comments regarding the response actions being taken, Nicor would clearly be interested in sitting down and discussing the process in more detail. Also, feel free to call me with your questions or comments.

Very truly yours,



Angela Foster-Rice

cc: **Brad Stimple**  
**Richard Tappan**  
**Kevin Donovan**  
**Steven Theis**

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